

SENATOR ROSEMARY McAULIFFE



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

A REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Spring, 2000

Dear Neighbors:

In even-numbered years the Legislature meets for just 60 days. In this short period, usually we make some minor policy changes and adjust the state budget to reflect new and better information about state needs.

This year, we had a major additional challenge: responding to the approval of Initiative 695 which removed \$1.2 billion from the state coffers for the rest of this biennium and greatly affected the funding that previously went predominantly to local governments and transportation. And it was agreeing on a supplemental budget to address these needs that sent us into a special session. In fact, as this went to press, final agreement had not yet been reached due to differing philosophies in the House and Senate on property tax cuts, education funding, and transportation spending proposals. Budget leaders will continue to negotiate until a deal can be made.

I, along with my Senate colleagues, support a responsible plan that protects public health and safety, and reduces the hit to transit and other local government services, while at the same time strengthens our commitment to our number-one priority: public education.

You'll find more information inside on this and other issues from the session.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you in Olympia as your 1st Legislative District state senator. I enjoyed hearing from many of you this session by letter, by phone, by e-mail, and when I ran into you back at home in town or on the soccer field. You kept me informed, and I appreciate it. Your active participation in government is so important, and it helps me represent you more effectively.

Remember that even when the Legislature concludes its business, my work on your behalf continues. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if I can be of help.

Sincerely,

Rosemary McAuliffe
Please Stay in Touch!



Please stay in touch!

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Students first, highways second

Entering the 2000 session, Senate Democrats were united: When responding to the approval of Initiative 695 with a budget proposal, we would protect public education. If there were budget reductions to be made to ease the impact of lost funding

for transportation, we would not trade our students' education for pavement.

As chair of the Senate Education Committee, I'm pleased to say that the Senate budget proposal not only protects what was already allotted last year for public education, with savings we were also able to propose several improvements that will greatly benefit both students and teachers.

Because of lower-than-expected enrollment and reduced pension costs, we needed to reinvest \$155 million in savings back into education to keep students our top priority and support our education reform efforts. This includes:

- \$20.5 million for **class size reduction and extended learning programs**.
- \$20.1 million for **professional development** and technology training for teachers and staff. Staff at each school site will be able to decide how they would like to use the funds to best support their work getting students to reach the new, higher state standards.
- \$9.5 million for school **safety programs** and equipment for all schools.
- \$34.7 million for **school construction**.

It is critical that the final supplemental operating budget includes all of these.

This session we also approved legislation to create a professional standards board for teachers. This board, comprised of educators and members of the public, will advise the State Board of Education on educator issues, and prepare a basic skills and subject matter assessments to be given to all new teachers to ensure they are well prepared to lead in the classroom.

Differing approaches to transportation funding lead to legislative gridlock

When the Legislature convened in January, we had a difficult job ahead of us: Craft supplemental operating and transportation budgets that respond to the needs of local governments, which lost millions of dollars in revenue that once was generated by car tabs. That money went predominantly into public health and safety programs, as well as transit.

Car tab revenues were also a major source of funding for transportation projects at the state level. With transportation and transit being so important to residents of the 1st Legislative District, I was concerned about how we were going to come up with a responsible plan that keeps people and goods moving.

That final plan is still unfinished due to disagreement between the House and Senate as to how to fund transportation. The Senate proposed a "3-year bridge to the future" that uses money from the state's reserves to keep cars, trucks, trains, and ferries moving despite the loss of revenue from I-695. We were able to offer this budget by proposing to use some of the state's \$1.3 billion reserve funds. I think the people expect the Legislature to reinvest their money into the things that matter most to them, such as traffic congestion relief and other transportation improvements.

Under the Senate transporta-

tion budget, the 1st Legislative District is slated to benefit from several scheduled projects that will make getting around a little easier. These include:

- Several projects along I-405 including construction of HOV lanes;
- Improvements to the Swamp Creek Bridge;
- Resurfacing and improving safety along State Route 522;
- Repairs to the Sammamish River Bridges;
- Adding an auxiliary lane to 220th SW; and
- Improving safety features on State Route 104 to the north-bound I-5 on-ramp.

Once again, I am hopeful that the final budget the Legislature approves will include these important projects for our area.

New transportation projects, congestion relief, and maintaining what we have are critical issues to the 1st Legislative District. Next session it will be important to develop a funding proposal to support a truly long-range plan for our transportation needs.

Legislators could use your help and advice as to how we can solve these problems. Please e-mail me at mcauliff_ro@leg.wa.gov with your ideas and proposals.

New life breathed into state's air-quality program

One effect of Initiative 695 was a loss of \$12.3 million from the state's air-quality program. Not many people knew it, but \$2 out of every motor vehicle excise tax bill went to fund nearly half the air-quality program's two-year budget.

The program measures air pollution, devises solutions to reduce it, enforces clean-air laws, and evaluates

whether air-quality programs are working. In short, it's a vital part of keeping Washington the safe and clean place to live that it is today. We all benefit from its existence.

I'm very pleased to report that both the House and the Senate's proposed supplemental budgets replace 90 percent of this important program's lost funding so we can

expect it to be included in the final budget the Legislature will pass. Those of us who worked on its behalf can now breathe a little easier.

Clean air is so important to our own health and that of the environment. We must protect the quality of life we value.

You(th) Count! Council concludes second successful year

This session, for the second year, I sponsored the 1st Legislative District You(th) Count! Council. In 1999, I created the group to give young people from our area greater exposure to the Legislature and to let them know how they can make a difference in the legislative process. The council also helps me by serving as a sounding board for issues that relate to young people.

Ten teenagers who either live in or attend school in the 1st Legislative District participated this year. Beginning in January, the council met on a regular basis to learn about the Legislature, how to make their opinions heard on legislation that was important to young people, and how to gather other opinions and ideas from peers to bring to legislators.

The You(th) Count! Council chose several pieces of legislation to track and speak out on this year, including a bill that would create an intermediate driver's license for new teenage drivers. As an issue that hits very close to home, they dove into their research, interviewed other students, analyzed the issue, and came up with comments that eventually two council members presented before the House Transportation Committee at a public hearing.

Although they had concerns, they remained supportive of the legislation

that would require additional driving experience before being granted a full license, among other provisions. The bill has now been signed into law by Gov. Locke.

Other issues the council followed included bills to allow teenagers to donate bone marrow; to create more after-school programs for middle school

students; and to improve school campus safety.

The council culminated its work with a field trip to Olympia and was honored by the full Senate when it unanimously adopted a resolution recognizing their efforts to make government better respond to the needs of citizens of all ages.

The members of the 2000 1st Legislative District You(th) Count! Council were:

Emelissa Baluyot, Juanita High School
Ashley Beckett, Bothell High School
Nicholas Carson, Inglemoor High School
Sean Curran, Skyview Junior High
Emily McLeod, Juanita High School

Joanna Minetti, Skyview Junior High
Sarah Nye, Skyview Junior High
Stephanie Pederson, Forest Ridge School
Christine Pitawanich, Skyview Junior High
Carl Rugg, Skyview Junior High



I'm shown here introducing Emelissa Baluyot and Emily McLeod before their testimony on the intermediate license bill.

Building a strong infrastructure

This session I introduced legislation to authorize funding for 63 critically needed infrastructure projects throughout the state through the Public Works Trust Fund. It won unanimous approval in both the Senate and the House.

The Public Works Trust Fund provides loans to assist local governments and special purpose districts, such as sewer districts, with local infrastructure projects necessary to keep up with growth, increased use, and other changes.

For the 2000 loan cycle, the bill authorizes \$123.5 million to be loaned to complete 63 water, sewer, road, bridge, storm, and solid waste projects. These include two major projects here in our own 1st Legislative District:

- The Woodinville Water District will receive a \$1.8 million loan for asbestos cement water pipe replacement; and
- Snohomish County will receive a \$10 million loan for reconstruction of the Southwest Recycling and Transfer Station.

A higher education close to home

After years of dreaming, planning, and building, the joint campus for the new University of Washington Bothell branch and Cascadia Community College is now just a few short months away from opening.

The campus will be dedicated on Sept. 16 at 1:00 p.m. The community is invited to attend and celebrate this wonderful occasion.

The first day of class at the beautiful new facility for both schools will be Sept.

25, 2000. Registration for classes at the state's newest community college begins April 24. You can get information by calling (425) 398-8512 or ask questions via e-mail at admissions@www.cascadia.ctc.edu.

For information on UW Bothell call (425) 352-5000.

I am so proud and excited that this world-class facility will be right in our backyard. It's a wonderful addition to our area and will be of benefit to community members for decades to come.



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